

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Agricultural Commissioner	(2) MEETING DATE 4/7/2015	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Martin Settevendemie 805-781-5910	
(4) SUBJECT Update regarding the State Water Resources Control Board's Grazing Regulatory Action Project. All Districts.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board receive and file this update regarding the State Water Resources Control Board's Grazing Regulatory Action Project.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) N/A	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(9) BUDGETED? No
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT { } Consent { } Presentation { } Hearing (Time Est. ____) { X } Board Business (Time Est. <u>15mins</u>)			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS { } Resolutions { } Contracts { } Ordinances { X } N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: { } 4/5 Vote Required { X } N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP N/A	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? N/A	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY { X } N/A Date: _____	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW Lisa Howe			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts			

County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Agricultural Commissioner / Martin Settevendemie
805.781.5910

DATE: 4/7/2015

SUBJECT: Update regarding the State Water Resources Control Board's Grazing Regulatory Action Project. All Districts.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board receive and file this update regarding the State Water Resources Control Board's Grazing Regulatory Action Project.

DISCUSSION

During the January 13, 2015 San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meeting, staff was directed to provide an overview of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Grazing Regulatory Action Project (GRAP).

The GRAP is a project initiated by the SWRCB to scope a statewide regulation addressing water quality impacts such as sediment, temperature and pathogens that the SWRCB claims to be attributable to animal grazing practices throughout California. Approximately one million acres of grazing land in San Luis Obispo County could potentially be impacted by such a regulation. According to the SWRCB, approximately 120 water quality impairments identified on the 2010 Clean Water Act (CWA) List of Impaired Waters for California are on lands with active grazing operations. The SWRCB states that utilizing the current regulatory approach of developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) for each of the identified impairments is not a practical solution. In addition to TMDL's, the SWRCB states the current approach, including the utilization of Water Board orders, grazing waivers and Water Quality Control Plan prohibitions, has proven to be ineffective and inconsistent statewide.

In addition to enforcing requirements of the CWA, the SWRCB is responsible for meeting requirements of the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, which includes addressing all discharges of waste that could affect the quality of the waters of the State, including nonpoint sources of pollution. According to the SWRCB, grazing in California is considered a nonpoint source of water pollution that is not currently regulated statewide and may contribute to water quality degradation through the discharge of sediment from erosion, discharges of bacteria from livestock feces, and increased temperature of streams due to the loss of riparian habitat.

The goal of the SWRCB is to develop a statewide regulatory framework addressing water quality impacts on both public and private grazing lands. The SWRCB states that the regulatory approach will account for regional differences in hydrology, topography, climate, land use, microeconomics and the cost of compliance to the regulated community.

In 2014 and early 2015, the SWRCB embarked on stakeholder input sessions or listening sessions targeting governmental agencies, tribes, academia, the ranching community, and environmental and environmental justice organizations. During 2015, SWRCB staff plan to compile the input provided during outreach sessions and allow for additional stakeholder input.

During the course of the statewide listening sessions held in San Luis Obispo, Redding and Bishop, there were many

comments made expressing that the concept of a statewide regulatory approach imposed on grazing land is unnecessary and widely opposed. At the San Luis Obispo listening session, there were many statements of opposition to the GRAP and very little support.

With the majority of stakeholders opposing any new regulation and questioning the feasibility of establishing a statewide regulation, the following are the predominant concerns/comments raised by stakeholders during the SWRCB listening sessions as reported by attendees:

- Provide clear objectives and measurable results to promote an effective public process
- Use available science to make informed decisions prior to implementing a regulatory approach
- Focus evaluation efforts on all potential impacts on water quality, not just grazing
- Consider all past and current efforts to maintain or improve water quality such as voluntary Ranch Management Plans and implemented Best Management Practices
- Consider all current regulatory rules addressing water quality on grazing land
- Clearly identify any proposed fee structure associated with this potential regulation
- Ensure a thorough review of economic impacts

Currently, the SWRCB is compiling the input provided by stakeholders for consideration. Later in 2015, the SWRCB will develop an initial proposal, conduct CEQA scoping and broader outreach, and provide opportunity for further public comment. In 2016, final drafts of the proposal and environmental document are scheduled to be completed. At that time, the proposal will be considered by the Water Boards for adoption.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT

University California Cooperative Extension collaborated on this report.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

None.

RESULTS

The intended result of this update is to inform the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors of the Grazing Regulatory Action Project.